Definitions

Dispensers:

A person lawfully authorized to dispense in this Commonwealth, including mail order and Internet sales of pharmaceuticals. The term does not include any of the following:

(1) A licensed health care facility that distributes the controlled substance for the purpose of administration in the licensed health care facility.

(2) A correctional facility or its contractors if the confined person cannot lawfully visit a prescriber outside the correctional facility without being escorted by a corrections officer.

(3) An authorized person who administers a controlled substance, other drug or device.

(4) A wholesale distributor of a controlled substance.

(5) A licensed provider in the LIFE program.

(6) A provider of hospice as defined in the act of July 19, 1979 (P.L.130, No.48), known as the Health Care Facilities Act.

(7) A prescriber at a licensed health care facility if the quantity of controlled substances dispensed is limited to an amount adequate to treat the patient for a maximum of five days and does not allow for a refill.

(8) A veterinarian.

Dispensing practitioners are required to report Schedule II-V controlled substances they dispense to patients by the close of the subsequent business day after dispensing. A Dispensing Practitioner is a medical practitioner that stocks controlled substances and distributes the medication to a patient, who then leaves the facility and is responsible for administering the medication themselves.

Prescribers:

A person who is licensed, registered or otherwise lawfully authorized to distribute, dispense or administer a controlled substance, other drug or device in the course of professional practice or research in this Commonwealth. The term does not include a veterinarian.

Act 191 of 2014

Background and Limitations of Pennsylvania PDMP System Data

- The Pennsylvania Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) began collecting Schedule II - V controlled substances dispensation data into the new system as of June 24, 2016. Prior to that, PDMP was housed at Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General and collected only Schedule II controlled substance prescriptions on a monthly basis.
- While dispensers were required by law to submit dispensation data without gaps in time to provide a more seamless transition between data collection systems, compliance was not 100%. Caution should be used in interpreting trends in dispensations during this time while the PDMP Office works with dispensers to improve compliance over time.
- The PDMP cannot speak to the compliance rates of pharmacies submitting dispensation records prior to June 2016, when the PDMP was transitioned to the Department of Health.

- When the new system went live in 2016, we saw a decrease in Schedule II prescription data submitted to the old system and an increase in Schedule II-V prescription data submitted to the new system as more dispensers came onboard. Caution should be used in interpreting trends in dispensations during this time.
- This data represents prescriptions that were filled and dispensed; the PDMP system has no way of monitoring prescriptions that were written, but never filled by a patient.

- Methadone Assisted Treatment (MAT) Programs and Narcotics Treatment Programs (NTP) are covered under the federal confidentiality regulation 42 CFR Part 2, Subpart C, which does not allow medical professionals in MATs/NTPs to submit any controlled substances dispensation information to the PA PDMP system.
 - Under method of payment - private pay can be considered as someone who paid for the prescription via cash, check, debit or a credit card.

- On January 1, 2017, the data collection frequency for the PA PDMP system changed from within 72 hours to no later than the close of the subsequent business day of dispensing the controlled substances.
- Stricter mandates on prescriber querying in certain circumstances were enacted in November 2016 through an amendment to Act 191 of 2014. These requirements went into effect on January 1, 2017.

- Per Act 191 of 2014, lawfully authorized prescribers are required to query the PDMP for an existing patient when the following clinical situations apply:

1) For each patient the first time the patient is prescribed a controlled substance by the prescriber for purposes of establishing a baseline and a thorough medical record; or
2) If a prescriber believes or has reason to believe, using sound clinical judgment, that a patient may be abusing or diverting drugs; or
3) Each time a patient is prescribed an opioid drug product or benzodiazepine by the prescriber.

These requirements apply (1) to inpatient or outpatient settings; to acute or anticipated chronic controlled substance(s) prescriptions; to new or established patients; and in situations where the prescriber is seeing his/her own patient or is covering for a colleague. Writing a controlled substance(s) prescription for the first time to a patient is the basis for checking the PDMP in (1) above.

- As of January 1, 2017, dispensers shall query the PDMP before dispensing an opioid drug product or a benzodiazepine prescribed to a patient if any of the following apply:

1) The patient is a new patient of the dispenser.
2) The patient pays cash when they have insurance.
3) The patient requests a refill early.
4) The patient is getting opioid drug products or benzodiazepines from more than one prescriber.
- While registration with the PDMP is mandatory, compliance is not 100%.
- As of January 1, 2017, if a patient has been admitted to a licensed health care facility or is in observation status in a licensed health care facility, the prescriber does not need to query the system after the initial query under subsection (a)(1) as long as the patient remains admitted to the licensed health care facility or remains in observation status in a licensed health care facility.

- The PDMP system does not receive any controlled substance administration data from an inpatient setting.
- Checking the PDMP is not required for any medication provided to a patient in the course of treatment while undergoing care in an emergency department. This exception does not apply to patients undergoing care in urgent care centers or when in observation status in a health care facility. If a medication prescription is issued during discharge, then the PDMP system must be queried.

Type of Datasets Available

While all de-identified prescription-level datasets are based on patient records of prescriptions filled, the datasets can be filtered in such a way to allow for the following:

Type of filtering	Description
Patient	Dispensation data for a defined set of patients (e.g. statewide during specific timeframe, patients living in a specific geographic region during a specific timeframe, etc.) that will include hashed prescriber/dispenser identifiers, if requested.
Prescriber	Dispensation data for patients associated with prescribers from a defined geographic area during a specific timeframe.
Dispenser	Dispensation data for patients associated with dispensers from a defined geographic area during a specific timeframe.

Requested Field	Variable Category	Description
dispensary_city	Dispensaries	City of the dispensary
dispensary_state	Dispensaries	State of the dispensary
dispensary_postal_code	Dispensaries	Postal code of the dispensary
Dispensary identifier	Dispensaries	Hashed dispensary identifier. Each dispensary has a single, unique hashed value within the dataset.
filled_at	Dispensations	Date prescription was filled
refill_number	Dispensations	Number of the fill of the prescription
payment_type	Dispensations	Method by which prescription was paid for (e.g. 'paid' = cash, 'Medicaid', etc.)
sold_at	Dispensations	Date prescription left the pharmacy
compound_drug	Dispensations	Compound drug indicator (TRUE of FALSE Boolean indicator)
partial_fill	Dispensations	Partial fill indicator (TRUE or FALSE Boolean indicator)
quantity	Dispensations	Number of metric units dispensed in metric decimal format
days_supply	Dispensations	Number of days the prescription will cover
drug_name	Drugs	Label Name "contains a combination of the drug name appearing on the package label, the strength description, and the dosage form description for a specified product"
drug_sequence	Drugs	Compound Drug Ingredient Sequence Number, if drug is a compound
units	Drugs	Identifies the unit of measure for the quantity dispensed
Narcotic Conversion Factor	Drugs	Conversion factor used to calculate the morphine milligram equivalent of the drug
Drug Schedule	Drugs	DEA schedule of controlled substance II-V
product_id_type	Drugs	Product Identifier Type (e.g. 'NDC')
product_id	Drugs	Product Identifier (e.g. NDC Number)
patient_city	Patients	City of the patient
patient_state	Patients	State of the patient
patient_postal_code	Patients	Postal code of the patient
patient_gender	Patients	Patient gender
Patient age	Patients	Age at dispensation for governmental agencies, age category (in not less than 5 year groupings) for non-governmental agencies
patient_location	Patients	Patient location as indicated in prescription record (e.g. 'home', 'long_term', 'outpatient')
patient_identification_type	Patients	Type of identification (drivers license, ssn, etc.)
Patient Identifier	Patients	Hashed patient identifier. Each individual has a single, unique hashed value within the dataset.
Prescriber Identifier	Prescribers	Hashed patient identifier. Each prescriber has a single, unique hashed value within the dataset.
Prescriber postal code	Prescribers	Postal code of the prescriber
Prescriber credentials	Prescribers	MD, DO, PA, CRPN, etc.
authorized_refill_count	Prescriptions	Number of refills authorized by the prescriber
prescription_number	Prescriptions	Prescription number
written_at	Prescriptions	Date prescription was written
veterinarian_prescription	Prescriptions	Indicator for veternary prescription